

Message Text

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14

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 AID-20 EB-11 AGR-20 COME-00 RSR-01 /160 W

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R 201615 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4980

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0388

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, DM

SUBJ: DAHOMEY: INTERNAL SITUATION

1. LOCAL SCENE NORMAL WITH NO FURTHER AGITATION. PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, MRGD HAS CONTINUED (A) TO CONDEMN FEBRUARY 28 EVENTS AS IRRESPONSIBLE, UNFORESEEN ACTION PROVOKED BY EXTREMISTS AND (B) TO DIVORCE ITSELF FROM ANTI- FRENCH OR ANTI- FOREIGN ASPECTS OF DEMONSTRATION. IN MEETING AT PRESIDENCY, PRESIDENT KEREKOU LOWERED

BOOM ON FRONT UNI DEMOCRATIQUE (FUD) WHOM HE ACCUSED OF HAVING STIMULATED FEBRUARY 28 DISTURBANCES. HE HAS ALSO CHARGED FUD WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES RESULTING FROM DEMONSTRATIONS, AND HAS FORBIDDEN LEADERS TO HOLD FURTHER PUBLIC MEETINGS. MAJORITY OF TRADE UNIONS REFUSE SUPPORT FUD OR ITS RABBLE ROUSING LEADER, MITRO BABA, WHOSE UNION CONSISTS OF ABOUT TWENTY WORKERS. WHILE LEFTIST EDUCATION MINISTER BADJOGOUME HAS REPORTEDLY MET QUIETLY WITH FUD LEADERS TO PLAN FURTHER ACTION, HIS CHANCES OF SUCCESS HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY SET BACK BY STRONG KEREKOU POSITION, AND EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY BY INTERIOR MINISTER AIKPE' S DECISION TO TAKE HIS DISTANCE FROM BADJOGOUME, RECOGNIZING THAT HIS OWN POSITION
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TEMPORARILY, BUT NOT SERIOUSLY, WEAKENED AS RESULT OF FUD ACTION.

2. ALLEGED FEBRUARY 28 PLOT BY ASSORTED GROUP OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, ZINSOUISTS, APITHITES, AND DISGRUNTLED CIVIL SERVANTS GIVES ALL APPEARANCE OF BEING A CANARD BASED ON REPORTS OF HIGHLY INEPT INTELLIGENCE SERVICE OR TRUMPED UP BY PROGRESSIVES IN GOVERNMENT TO NEUTRALIZE ELEMENTS WHO MIGHT SUPPORT KEREKOU. ARRESTED OFFICERS HAVE NOW BEEN PARCELLED TO INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY WHERE THEY WILL BE HELD IN ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION FOR SIX MONTHS, THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF KEEPING SOMEONE OUT OF CIRCULATION WHEN CHARGES CANNOT BE MADE.

3. FROM ALL REPORTS, DAHOMEAN AND FOREIGN REACTION TO FEBRUARY 28 DEMONSTRATION HAS STRENGTHENED KEREKOU' S HAND VIS- A- VIS PROGRES- SIVES. IN ADDITION TO SHOWING THEM THAT ANTI- FOREIGN, OVERLY NATIONALISTIC APPROACH NOT IN DAHOMEY' S DEVELOPMENTAL INTEREST, HE HAS CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF VALUE OF MODERATE APPROACH TO NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE IN TERMS OF TWO AS YET UNANNOUNCED FRENCH DECISIONS - GIFT OF 5,000 TONS OF WHEAT FLOUR, AND AGREEMENT TO FINANCE TWO- THIRDS OF FIFTEEN MILLION DOLLAR COTTON TEXTILE PROJECT. IN ADDITION, HE CAN POINT TO CURRENT INVESTMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRIVATE US AND GERMAN BUSINESSMEN WHOSE INTEREST WOULD CEASE IF DAHOMEY' S IMAGE IS FURTHER TARNISHED BY LEFTWING DEMAGOGUERY.

4. IN SHORT, WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER ALLADAYE AND INTERIOR MIN- ISTER AIKPE HAVE THEIR PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS AND WHILE EDUCATION MINISTER BADIOGOUME AND TRANSPORT MINISTER BEHETON MIGHT WISH A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS, THE ABERRATION OF FEBRUARY 28 WILL CAUSE ALL FOUR TO THINK TWICE BEFORE TRYING TO UNSEAT KEREKOU.

ANDERSON

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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